

Dear Representatives

On December 22, 2008 at 10:30 in the morning, my mother Helen Margret Starr Wunch was run over and killed by a snow plow truck. She was walking from her cottage at the Blue Water Lodge which is a retirement village located in Fort Gratiot, Michigan to the main lodge to meet with her friends before lunch. This was a daily routine. She normally walks with a friend of hers from another cottage, but on this day her friend was running late. Lucky for her friend, not so lucky for my mother.

The weather that day was windy, gusting to 22 mph, snowing and cold.

As my mom walked across the snow filled driveway parking area she was hit and backed over by a snow plow truck. The driver of the truck did not see her until she was in front of the blade. This means that she was run over by the back tires, the front tire and hit by the blade before she was seen.

Obviously the truck driver did not see my mother and obviously she did not see, or hear the truck. She did not hear the truck because the Blue Water Lodge was built close to a busy road and there was no working backup alarm on the snow plow truck. She could not see the truck because it was a windy, snowy day and the truck had a flashing amber light that could only be seen from the front of the vehicle.

My mother was crushed from the waist down and four hours later, due to massive internal injuries, she passed away.

This could have been avoided if the truck was equipped with a simple warning light that could be seen 360 degrees around the truck and the backup warning signal was working.

About a week later someone else was killed by a snow plow truck in Michigan and earlier this year someone out of state was killed by a snow plow truck. I do not know the particulars for these other deaths, but I do know that it takes many mistakes before a tragic accident occurs. Accidents like that can be avoided by the passing of Senate Bill 980.

We will never know how many close calls or near misses there have been between pedestrians and snow plow trucks. We will never know how many accidents have been avoided because the owner of a snow plow truck had the common sense to put the proper warning devises on their truck. We do know this. My mother needlessly died because these devises were not working, nor visible on the truck that ran her over.

Some people have testified that it will cost \$500.00 to have this equipment installed on their truck. This is simply not true. I personally have purchased these safety devises that install in less than one minute for \$48.00 delivered to my house.

Besides that, if you take a look at city snowplow trucks, they have warning lights and backup buzzers. Emergency vehicles have the same. Fork lifts and other slow moving equipment also have these devises. Since snowplows are anything but slow moving vehicles, it only makes sense that should have these safety devises. I have talked with many people about this proposal, even people that plow snow and everyone thinks that this is a common sense law that should

have been required many years ago. I have read many articles in the paper where snow plow drivers were interviewed about this law and they all agree that this would make sense for their industry

One last thought. I go to church in Maryville, Michigan. It is mainly a residential area. Most of the people that attend our church are from Marysville. I have talked with many of them about the inconvenience of a flashing warning light and the backup buzzer noise during the early morning hours. They all said approximately the same thing to me. "What's the difference between the scrapping of the blade down my driveway or a backup buzzer and flashing light? As soon as they are gone I go back to sleep. It actually gives me peace of mind knowing that my driveway will be clear when I get up to go to work in the morning." So, the inconvenience factor is really not much of a factor at all. The main purpose of this bill is for safety, safety for all of the citizens in the state of Michigan. Just like the seat belt law. It may be an inconvenience to be required to put on a seat belt every time you drive or ride in a car, but this law saves lives. Senate Bill 980 will do the same.

I cannot imagine what the driver of the truck has been going through this past year and a few months. He has to live with this the rest of his life. Senate Bill 980 could help prevent present and future drivers of snowplows from going through the mental anguish that he must go through daily.

This is a good bill, a safety bill, a common sense bill that needs to be passed by the House of Representatives and signed into law by the Governor. I urge you to talk with all of the representatives to convince them to vote yes on Senate Bill 980.

Sincerely,

John Wunch, Jodi Wunch, Shaun Wunch, Pepper Wunch, Elizabeth Howard, Aaron Howard, Chris Wunch, Mary Wunch, Melissa Wunch, Linda Sbraccia, David Sbraccia, Sherry Sbraccia, John Christopher Sbraccia, Kristy Sbraccia and all ten of the great grandchildren

If you have any questions, feel free to email me.
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